

First Team In the Christmas Spirit...



By Staff Sgt. Susan German, 122nd MPAD



By Sgt. Christina Rockhill, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

(Above) Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld (left) and Maj. Gen. Peter Chiarelli, commanding general of the 1st Cavalry Division and Task Force Baghdad, serve Christmas Eve meals to Soldiers at the Pegasus Dining Facility on Camp Liberty in Baghdad Dec. 24. The Baghdad base camp, home to the Fort Hood-based division, was the final stop for Rumsfeld's surprise holiday visit to Iraq. He also stopped in Mosul and Tikrit.

(Left) Spc. Tony Savickas (left), a trombone player from Ypsilanti, Mich., and trumpet player Sgt. Larry Dean, from Copperas Cove, Texas, both with the 1st Cavalry Division's band, don Santa Claus hats as they provide accompaniment for the jazz combo during a Christmas concert at Camp Union III.

Commandos Celebrate Christmas with Carols

By Pfc. Matthew McLaughlin
 10th Mtn. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP AL TAHREER, Baghdad -- The sounds of helicopters overhead were drowned out with Christmas cheer when Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team (Commandos), 10th Mountain Division, were serenaded with Christmas sounds from the 1st Cavalry Division Band at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center Dec. 9.

The band played a vari-

ety of Christmas songs, ranging from classic tunes like "Frosty the Snowman," to classics with a twist by musicians like Jack Johnson and No Doubt. The creativity and effort did not go unnoticed, said Spec. Allison Wallace, a flutist with the band.

"This is the best crowd we've had all year," she said.

Col. Mark Milley, 2nd BCT commander, thanked

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By Pfc. Matthew McLaughlin, 10th Mtn. Div. Public Affairs

First sergeants from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, sing Christmas Carols at a 1st Cavalry Division Band concert at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center on Camp Al Tahreer.

CG and CSM Wish the First Team a Merry Christmas

Command Sgt. Maj. Ciotola and I want to wish every Soldier, Sailor, Airmen, Marine and civilian serving as members of Task Force Baghdad a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. We offer our warmest greetings and heartfelt thanks to all of the men and women serving in this magnificent Task Force.

This holiday season will mean different things to each of us. Throughout our nation's great history Soldiers have had to spend time away from their homes and families during the holiday season. We have sacrificed in order to defend the freedom Americans continue to enjoy and to defend the ideals and values we have come to hold in such high regard. Today every member of TF Baghdad joins the ranks of many that have sacrificed so much, American patriots who came before us; Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines separated from families during a holiday season acknowledging, through selfless actions,

MG Peter Chiarelli

**1st Cav.
Div. CG**



that some things - - larger than the individual - - are worth the sacrifice.

Please know that the effort we make here is for a noble cause. We are here to bring democracy to Iraq and improve the lives of millions of Iraqis, many who will know true freedom for the first time. The selfless service you give will be remembered for generations far beyond this deployment. Modern day Iraq is what many believe to be the cradle of civilization. The history of the Middle East is the history of our world. Your participation in this operation will forever link you to that history.

Today, the strength of our great nation is on display by the citizens of Iraq. Every day

CSM Neil Ciotola

**1st Cav.
Div. CSM**



they see first hand the most diverse army in the world working to improve their lives. Working to improve the lives of strangers, in spite of the fact we are attacked nearly every day. They have witnessed the compassion Soldiers display when insurgents attack innocent Iraqis. Iraqis who wish nothing more than to get on with a normal life, a life not unlike the lives we all know back home. Nearly every Iraqi I've met has asked me how difficult it is to be away from my family. The fact we are separated is not missed by Iraqi's who know we are sacrificing. Your actions are more important than you can imagine.

I believe our efforts will bring peace to a country that

only knew tyranny through the iron fist of Saddam Hussein. While the people of Iraq may not yet have a complete understanding of the richness of democratic ideals, they yearn to breathe free. Our sacrifices are appreciated by the American people and the Iraqi people alike.

The 2004 Holiday season provides each of us the opportunity to brighten the days of our comrades around us. We find ourselves away from family and friends of our youth and everyday, but with our brothers and sisters in Arms. We know that you can find it in your hearts to make the best of the season. Take a moment today, this week, or this month and encourage those around you. A smile and positive attitude can be contagious. Christmas cheer will help us all traverse the holiday season. Spread the good word, be contagious.

God Bless you all, God Bless the people of Iraq and may God Bless the United States of America. First Team!



Useful Iraqi Words/Phrases

holiday - ijaaza	cloudy - ghaa'im
gift - hadeeya	cold - baarid
food - TAHaam	meal - wajba
family - AH'ila	tree - shajara

Saturday

High: 61
Low: 45



Sunday

High: 59
Low: 36



Monday

High: 57
Low: 34



Weather information provided by 1CD Staff Weather Office (SWO)

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News Notes

X-mas in Hawaii Can be Expensive

HONOLULU (AP) -- A shortage of Christmas trees in Hawaii has raised prices to more than \$200 each, drawing complaints from cost-conscious shoppers who are eager to buy trees before the holiday. Tree buyers camped outside a shopping center hours before dawn on Saturday to await a shipment of 130 noble firs flown in from Oregon. A crowd of more than 200 people had gathered by morning, when a salesman announced the trees would cost \$165 to \$200 each. Consumers complained that was at least twice the price charged just a few days earlier. In previous weeks, trees sold for \$30 to \$70.

Drug Possession Puts Santa in Cuffs

HIGHLAND PARK, Mich. (AP) -- A man who visited a middle school dressed as Santa Claus on Thursday left with a citation for misdemeanor marijuana possession. The 40-year-old Detroit man faces up to 90 days in jail and a \$500 fine after a small plastic bag of marijuana was found in the pocket of his street coat, which he left in a school restroom. A deputy who works at the school found the marijuana while searching the coat for identification after a teacher found it in the bathroom. The man dressed as Santa approached the deputy a short time later and identified the coat.



(Above) Kalluk, a 780-pound polar bear, is full of Christmas spirit as he frolics with a snowman toy while doing the backstroke at the San Diego Zoo. AP



X-mas Celebration:



Back Home-Style

(Left) Visitors pose for photographs Sunday night in front of the 'People's Tree' on the west lawn of the U.S. Capitol. The 106-year-old, 70-foot red spruce from Highland County, Va., is decorated with 4,500 ornaments made by schoolchildren and Virginia residents.

(Below) Santa, aka Loren Willers, and Mrs. Claus, aka wife Beth, play disc golf Saturday at Dankwardt Park in Burlington, Iowa.



AP

The Hawk Eye

Cajun Christmas Celebrated in Iraq

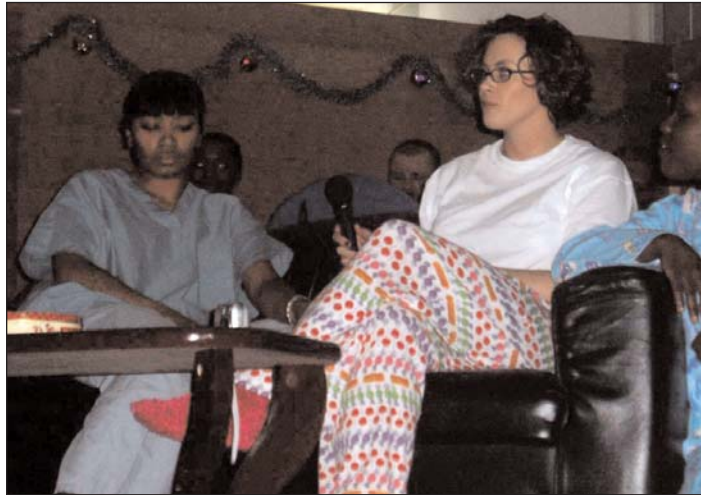
By Spc. Erin Robicheaux
256th BCT Public Affairs

CAMP AL TAHREER, Baghdad -- Santa Claus came to town bringing toys and goodies to all of the good little Soldiers of the 256th Tiger Brigade. On Dec. 20 the 199th Forward Support Battalion (FSB) and 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment of the 256th Brigade Combat Team (BCT) joined together to bring the meaning of Christmas to "Tigerland," the brigade's portion of Camp Al Tahreer.

The two units had many gifts for their audience. After opening with a prayer and a moment of silence for the four fallen Soldiers of the 256th and their families, several troops gave their renditions of what Christmas is all about. Some read short essays, while others shared classics, as well as original poems on the meaning of the holiday season.

In another beautifully wrapped box, a few Soldiers shared their gift of song with everyone in attendance. In addition to solos and a choir made up of both units, there was also a skit celebrating Christmas in many cultures. A family sat around their tree as the mother and father attempted to explain to their children that the holidays were about more than receiving gifts.

Spc. Keith Istre of Mermentau, La., Company C, 199th FSB sang "O, Holy



By Spc. Erin Robicheaux, 256th BCT Public Affairs

2nd Lt. Candace Biery, Headquarters Company, 199th Forward Support Battalion, plays a mother who is trying to teach her children of the true meaning of Christmas during a holiday event Dec. 20 for the Soldiers of the 256th Brigade Combat Team of the Louisiana National Guard at Camp Al Tahreer in Baghdad. Sitting next to her is her "daughter," Sgt. Victoria Carey, and also a member of HHC.

Night" in the Cajun French language, native to the Louisiana Brigade. Shortly thereafter, the children's old Cajun uncle, Uncle Pete showed up to tell the story, Twas the Cajun Night Before Christmas, by Trosclair, Howard Jacobs, and James Rice. Uncle Pete, who was played by Maj. Andre Vige from St. Martinville, La., the operations officer for the 199th FSB, stole the show and was able to convince the kids of what the true meaning of

Christmas was about.

The program was concluded by a concert of Christmas carols and gifts were handed out to each person in the audience. The event was produced entirely by Spc. Trilisa Merrill from Leesville, La. a member of Headquarters Company, 199th FSB. Everyone received little stockings filled with treats, and overall, what a wonderful present from the 199th FSB and 2-156th to the entire family of the 256th Tiger Brigade.

In Brief

Spears Named Top Star of 2004

NEW YORK (AP) -- "Access Hollywood" has named its "Top Ten Stars of 2004," with Britney Spears in the No. 1 spot. The rankings are based on the number of stories the syndicated entertainment television show aired on each star. Spears - who was married twice, canceled a summer tour because of a knee injury and released a greatest hits album - topped the list with 119 stories.



The Real World Comes To Texas

NEW YORK (AP) -- Dude! MTV's "The Real World" is headed to Austin, Texas. "We've been thinking about Austin for a long time," co-creator and executive producer Jon Murray told The Associated Press Wednesday. "It's a great college town. It's a great music town. It's just a really young place. People go to college there and just don't want to leave," Murray said. The show brings together seven strangers between the ages of 18 and 24 to live in a swanky loft or house and films them around the clock, at home and on the town. The 16th season's seven cast members will start getting real in the Lone Star state early next year. The 24 episodes will begin airing in June.

Merry
Christmas



By Pfc. Matthew McLaughlin, 10th Mtn. Div. Public Affairs

Soldiers from the 58th Combat Engineer Company from Fort Irwin, Calif., were especially enthusiastic during a 1st Cavalry Division Band concert Dec. 9 at Camp Al Tahreer in Baghdad.

10th Mtn. Expresses Christmastime Cheer

Continued from Page 1

the band for their performance and presented them a plaque in appreciation, as well as a 10th Mountain Div. coin to each band member. He said their music provides solace for war-weary Soldiers.

"Christmas is a special time for everyone," he said. "Whether it's your first deployment or it's your 10th deployment, it never gets easier being away from your family. Things like the 1st Cavalry Division Band makes things easier for us."

The audience voiced their opinion with rousing applause. Some Soldiers from the 58th Combat Engineer Company, a unit from Fort Irwin, Calif., attached to 2nd BCT, went the extra mile to show their appreciation, giving the band standing ovations after numerous songs.

"It isn't everyday that people come out to play music for us," said Sgt. Martin Hernandez, 58th Engineers. "They took the time to entertain us; we wanted to let them know we appreciate it. They're No Doubt song ruled!"

The band provided a memorable night, but the most unforgettable songs came not from the band but rather 2nd BCT company commanders and first sergeants.

Milley "suggested" a friendly caroling competition between the two, with hilarious results. The rowdy audience declared the first sergeants winners with their off-tune rendition of "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer." Their reward was an encore presentation, this time playing "Frosty the Snowman," with the support of 2nd BCT sergeants major.

"We couldn't compete with the 1st Cav. Band, but I think the Soldiers got a kick out of it," said Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Mahoney, 2nd BCT command sergeant major. "We won't be auditioning for chorus any time soon."

The band said they appreciated the applause and take great pleasure in performing for Soldiers all over Iraq and will continue to bring Christmas cheer until Santa retires to the North Pole.

Brothers Reunite in Baghdad

By Spc. Brian Schroeder
10th Mtn Div. Public Affairs

CAMP AL TAHEREER, Baghdad -- Before flying out to fight insurgency in Iraq, Soldiers say goodbye to their families and friends, for the last time, until they come back from their deployment. For some Soldiers, the hellos come earlier with family members who are currently stationed in Iraq.

Spec. Josh White, a truck driver with the 1487th Transportation Battalion reunited with his brother Sgt. Dustin White, a 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division medic on a surprise visit to Camp Al Tahreer.

Josh, who has been stationed at Camp Navistar, Kuwait, for the past 10 months, was on a mission with his Ohio National Guard unit to drop off large storage containers and light-weight medium tactical vehicles at Camp Al Tahreer. Coincidentally, his older brother Dustin is stationed at the stopping point for the convoy.

Josh said he heard of the mission the night before his unit was leaving. This did not give him enough time to inform his brother he was coming to Camp Al Tahreer, which made

for a surprise Josh said he will never forget.

"It was a complete surprise," he said. "He had no idea I was coming and neither did I until the last minute. I feel lucky having the chance to meet up with my brother in Iraq while we are both deployed."

This is the second deployment for Dustin and the first for Josh. Both joined the Army around Sept. 11 to fight for their country in the Global War on Terrorism. Dustin said he can remember the day that made him want to join.

"I remember sitting out back when Josh came to get me," he said. "We went inside and watched the second plane crash into the World Trade Center. A few days later I asked Josh, who had all ready signed up in the National Guard, where the recruiting office was. I felt like it was my patriotic duty to sign up for the Army after what happened."

Dustin said since meeting up with his brother they have spent time catching up and talking about their experiences while being deployed.

"We called our mom from the phone center and both talked to her," Josh said. "She was completely shocked and surprised that we were together over here."



By Spc. Brian Schroeder, 10th Mtn. Div. Public Affairs

Sgt. Dustin White, a medic with 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, poses with his brother Spec. Josh White, a 1487th Transportation Battalion truck driver.